

Cooperative Education in a Continuing Education Day School

Cooperative education programs may be offered in continuing education day schools, allowing mature students to earn credits through work placements in the community. These programs must meet all the requirements outlined in *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning, 2000*.

How do students participate?

Cooperative education programs in continuing education day schools are advertised on school board websites, in local newspapers, and on local radio and television. In order to participate, students must:

- meet the requirements for registration in a continuing education day school, register for the program, and take part in a pre-course interview before the start of the program;
- have completed or be enrolled in the appropriate related course(s) from the Ontario curriculum, as required for a co-op program. (Grade 11 and 12 credits obtained through the PLAR equivalency or challenge process may be used to fulfil the related-course requirement for a cooperative education credit.);
- take part in a workplace interview with the potential employer/supervisor before starting the cooperative education placement.

How do cooperative education programs in continuing education day schools benefit students?

Cooperative education programs offered in continuing education day schools:

- can engage returning students who were early school leavers by providing an opportunity for learning in the workplace;
- enable students to earn the compulsory and/or optional credits they need to complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD);
- enable students who are recent immigrants to gain Canadian workplace experience and/or develop their English-language skills;
- can serve as a stepping stone to employment after the placement is completed.

Placement considerations

- Although cooperative education placements must be arranged by the school, mature students may suggest placements in their area of expertise for consideration by the school board.
- Placements must be assessed for safety and for the educational opportunities they offer before students are assigned to them.
- Although cooperative education students do not normally earn wages for work done in a placement, school boards have the discretion to allow students in specialized programs or in particular types of placements (e.g., placements in unionized environments) to receive payment.
- Cooperative education placements must be differentiated from a mature student's job or other regularly scheduled work commitments.

Programming considerations

School boards offering cooperative education courses in a continuing education day school must:

- establish standard procedures for the implementation and delivery of such programs;
- ensure that all ministry requirements for cooperative education are met, including requirements for developing a Personalized Placement Learning Plan (PPLP) and for regular workplace monitoring meetings involving the teacher, the student, and the workplace supervisor.

School boards should also consider:

- packaging two cooperative education credits with a related course (e.g., a business studies course), thereby enabling a student to earn three compulsory credits towards an OSSD;
- providing opportunities for virtual cooperative education (or "e-co-op"), and/or e-learning modules for the classroom component of the program, for students who experience challenges in accessing courses or placements.

Resources

- *Cooperative Education and Other Forms of Experiential Learning: Policies and Procedures for Ontario Secondary Schools, 2000*
- Policy/Program Memorandum No. 76A, "Workplace Safety and Insurance Coverage for Students in Work Education Programs", September 27, 2000
- Prior learning assessment: www.plarformaturestudents.com
- Health and safety: www.livesafeworksmart.net; www.passporttosafety.com
- Assistance in locating employers: Provincial Employer Registry at www.employerregistry.ca, and/or the Passport to Prosperity Coordinator at the Business Education Council or Local Training Board in your area at www.obep.on.ca
- E-learning modules for the classroom component of co-op programs: <http://resources.elearningontario.ca>
- Virtual Cooperative Education (or "e-Co-op") Fact Sheet: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/studentssuccess/coopVirtual.pdf

For co-op program requirements, see the Cooperative Education Fact Sheet at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ppm/factsheet.html

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